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January 7, 2002

John Ashcroft, Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Mr. Ashcroft:

There is no real, clear consensus among those in the IT industry as to what impact would there have been had this lawsuit against Microsoft proceeded to the end. It would have taken years for the full effect of the lawsuit "remedies" to have been felt, but this much is immediately clear: As soon as any breakup of Microsoft would have taken effect, there would most certainly have been wide-ranging disruption in both services and support. Additionally, even before any breakup, there would have been a serious depression in software and services sold, as most people would have adopted a "wait-and-see" attitude. All this, however, is both speculative and unnecessary, now that this settlement has been reached.

The settlement will benefit consumers with its many provisions concerning Microsoft's relinquishing of intellectual property to competitors and the government. It will mean that hardware makers will be able to install non-Microsoft software more conveniently on computers with a Windows OS, and furthermore, they can do so with impunity, knowing that Microsoft is forbidden to coerce them to do otherwise.

I am hoping that this settlement prevails through the review process. As it is now, the entire IT business, along with the rest of the country's economy, is experiencing slower growth. I would expect that, at least insofar as the IT industry is concerned, once this settlement is affirmed, these doubts will be banished and hopefully the IT business community will recover to once again lead our country's economy out of this recession.

I am appreciative of this opportunity to express my opinion in this way. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ed Russell
President